The MINISTER'S QUARTERLY

Continuing The Seminar Quarterly

VOLUME XI NO. 3 AUGUST, 1955

Issued in the Interest of Christian Worship and Preaching

The Rev. Gaius Glenn Atkins
Editor

Published quarterly by
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY
OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
287 Fourth Avenue New York 10, N. Y.

SINGLE COPIES 25 CENTS. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION ONE DOLLAR per year

Entered as second-class matter March 2, 1945, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under Act of March 3, 1879

THE MINISTER'S QUARTERLY

Contents Vol. XI, No. 3

PAGE

I. *Concerning Words and Seasons* 3
THE EDITOR

II. *Theological Assumptions of Prayer* 5
THE REV. ALEXANDER WINSTON

III. *Recommended Reading List for Autumn 1955* . 9
THE REV. LAWRENCE L. DURGIN, Reporting

IV. *The New Hymnal* 13
THE REV. FREDERIC FOX

V. *The Place of the Association* 15
THE REV. ROBERT G. ARMSTRONG

VI. *A Service of Dedication on the Installation of an Organ* 19
THE REV. REUBEN A. STAUSS

VII. *When Thou Shalt Be Old* 20
THE REV. LOUIS HIEB

VIII. *A Minister Appeals to His People* 21
THE REV. GORDON C. SPEER

IX. *Ministers of the Ministering Community* . . . 23
THE REV. ROY M. PEARSON

X. *Apostolic Faith for Our Time* 29
THE REV. GEORGE TOLOVER TOLSON

All rights reserved

The Department of the Ministry is not responsible for opinions expressed in these pages nor is the Editor responsible for the views of contributors.

All communications relating to subscriptions should be addressed to the office of The General Council, Room 915, 287 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

All contributions (typewritten where possible) should be addressed to the Editor, with stamped envelope for return in case of non-acceptance, % Council office.

Concerning Words and Seasons

The Editor

WORDS are a mystery—and a miracle. Their beginnings are hopelessly lost but they have furnished indispensable steps in the stairs up which we have climbed in our always unfinished ascent. They carry with them overtones of memory and association, and they are the guardians of the enduring. Once the new has found a name or a word to fit it, it is thereafter as permanent as dictionaries —perhaps more so. Words are like ships which set out from strange harbors with meanings, some of which are no longer current—but their bequests endure. They are like ships which traffic from port to port and yet with something left from their first bills of lading.

There is a fascinating relationship between words and seasons. When our vanished ancestors began to discern the sequence of the seasons, they eventually —with the help of the moon—divided them into months and when the months got named, our most useful time pattern was complete. There must be a way of tracing the lines and associations which named the months in various civilizations, but this writer does not know them. The Romans, for the most part, furnished us the nomenclature we use. They remembered thus two of their emperors and set in mid-summer sequence July and August.

* * *

It is one of the wonders of words that there are in all of them something beyond their dictionary meanings—like "overtones" in music. By no means, the least of a preacher's task is the evocation of these overtones not only in the music of many words but in their power of suggestion. August is a word like that. It repeats the authority of Roman emperors and furnishes a work adjective. When we have said that something is august, we have invested it with awe and wonder.

August itself along our isothermal lines is more or less a transition month—the early harvestings are gathered in—the final harvests are still to be gathered in. It is a season in which good farmers rest their fields for a little and let them lie fallow—which is, amongst so many other things, what August ought to do for a preacher, or have done for him.

* * *

Good preaching is the issue of much brooding and some commitments of a text or a theme to the more or less subconscious processes of the mind. A minister's reading also needs to lie fallow in his mind. Most of us, if we should trace the genesis of our so-called original ideas would find their origin in some book, once read and supposedly forgotten—but finally when the time is ripe, the subconscious balances its book and the idea is there—ours and his who gave it to us first.

Daniel Webster has given testimony to the accumulated resources upon which he was able to draw when the need arose, and Emerson said that the beauty of the physical world waited to lend beauty and dignity to the orator's task.

* * *

Our time on the whole is not too subservient to the preacher's need for meditation. Topical preaching particularly is likely to be, too largely, instant, so to speak, and insistent it must take its tempo from newspaper headlines, and

they themselves are fugitive and ephemeral. There must be in every sermon a place for the timeless, a preacher can, if he pleases, begin with current concerns and in his conclusions relate them to sovereign Christian principles, or he can begin with the great Christian inspirations and relate them in conclusion to yesterday's headline. The first kind of preaching is likely to be richest in power, the second in popularity and the preacher may take his choice.

The editor has not had across a long span of years now as many comments in the Quarterly as would be expected. In a few cases incautious statements challenging cherished orthodoxes has started the makings of controversy but for the most part, the Quarterly has not moved in controversial regions. There have always been friendly letters and these received of late have lamented the decadence of preaching amongst us and stressed the need for rebirth of preaching, which is not so simple as it sounds for it demands a recasting of church programmes and preacher's habits and a changed sense of values. But it's worth trying.

The writer has read a widely advertised and favorably reviewed book "Apes, Angels, and Victorians," which deals with a fascinating detail on the work of Darwin and Huxley and the rise and transforming power of evolution. It is a good date line book from which to date the rise of ideas whose transforming power seems still inexhaustible.

And there is a new, compact and stimulating life of Mahatma Ghandi. His life was a revelation of a power almost too simple for exposition and yet in it a promise to transform civilizations if we only dared trust it.

This writer has been graciously informed of the contemplated changes in the format and direction of the Quarterly—all these letters have roused his curiosity, and he is as anxious to see the changed form as any of the Commission who have so thoughtfully and patiently considered all the elements involved.

It has been a great privilege to have shared the task of the Quarterly. Pretty much all our periodicals have changed form and leadership since the Quarterly began its career. Its course has been rather steadfast though always responsive. But the fundamentals which have maintained its structure have been "Christian Worship and Preaching." And these have held their own through changing civilizations.

* * *

There are lovely strains in the Psalms about going out and coming in as though these two between them contained the whole of life—and there is no more blessed returning than going back after a happy vacation to a cherished pulpit. So many things are waiting there. May those who read this issue find them waiting and therefore thank God.

* * *

EDITORIAL NOTE

The proposed changes in the MINISTER'S QUARTERLY to which Dr. Atkins refers above are to be incorporated in the next issue. You are invited to watch for that issue.

We are happy to state that Dr. Atkins' salient and nourishing Editorial Comment will continue to be a feature of the QUARTERLY.

Theological Assumptions of Prayer

The Rev. Alexander Winston

New Haven, Connecticut

PRAYER is an act so habitual to Christian practice, so subjective in its satisfactions and person-to-Person in its communications that we rarely subject it to detached analysis. As well, we might say, be cooly rational about Chopin's melodies or Shakespeare's verse; you only retain the bones and lose the life of them; such critical scrutiny is nothing but an intellectual autopsy. We pray, as William James says, not because it is reasonable, but because we must. While this defense of one of life's vital processes has more than a germ of truth, there is a first step in rational analysis which can be taken without touching the question of prayer's validity. Initially we can ask: What are the *assumptions* of prayer? what must the actual situation be *if* prayer is authentic? What does it presuppose? Our present purpose is to consider the most essential assumptions behind the prayerful act. A second step, which we shall not attempt to take here, would determine if those assumptions are coherent with the total body of propositions which, on more experiential grounds, we hold to be true.

1. *Prayer assumes that God is, and that He possesses saving power, wisdom and goodness.* Since He forever expresses His goodness with wisdom in power, we may say in plain speech that God is always "doing His best." According to one's theology, that "best" is either (a) flawless perfection, so that the world moves from glory to glory, and nothing occurs which improves it in the slightest degree, or (b) the world at any concrete moment is the best possible under a limiting set of circumstances. But if the first is true, prayer is meaningless, for no enlargement of faith, joy or health would then be possible. Perfection knows no "better"; change is a foolish waste of energy on this theory; and stoic acceptance could be our only intelligible role. The implication of prayer, which is an initiating act with petition as its essential core, is that some state of affairs (new courage, hope, peace, patience, health, confidence, insight) is truly better than the present state. Prayer says the world is not perfect; we are called upon to initiate prayerful action directed to bettering a faulty state of affairs; therefore God's "best" is a creation which in some degree falls short of the divine will. God, too, wants the world to be better (otherwise our prayers are foolish) but cannot bring about the betterment short of our asking in prayer. In our first assumption, therefore, God possesses saving power, wisdom and goodness; He is always doing His best in accordance with those attributes of His person; but due to a limiting factor His best is not perfection.

2. *Man is free to accept or reject God's grace.* This second assumption derives from the initiatory nature of prayer. In our communication with God something vital is occurring. Standing in spiritual loneliness, at the point of moral decision where none can act for us and we must decide our own destiny, we either turn to God or turn away from Him. In a desert place the soul exerts

its private personal power, treads the razor's edge, chooses heaven or hell. Predestination or determinism in any of its forms makes a folly of man's inalienable responsibility. Prayer, if they were true, would be one more grinding of the cosmic wheels; never an initiatory act which springs from the self, but a mere resultant of inexorable antecedent causes. Determinism destroys prayer because it destroys man.

If we accept man's freedom as an assumption of prayer, we then gain insight into the nature of the limitation on God's power. It is conceivable that in His creation God had two possibilities: either to construct a world of utter determination, which like a well-oiled machine would flash smoothly through its predestined course; or to construct a world exhibiting degrees of freedom, which freedom would achieve its pinnacle in acts of moral choice. To construct both would be a contradiction, and even the most orthodox theologians would agree that God does not act in a contradictory manner. So God chose to create man in His own image, as a person not a machine, and thereby placed a distance between His will and man's will. A moral being cannot be forced; he must be won; persuaded, not ordered; his integrity respected and his isolation preserved.

3. *We can communicate effectively with God in prayer.* He is not solely a sub-personal "push" (as in evolutionary naturalism) nor solely an infinitely transcendent and unqualified Subject (as often in neo-orthodoxy). Though both of these aspects of God's activity have their partial validity, He meets us in worship primarily as Personal Being, who understands our human aspirations and is understandable in His response. In addition, unless our praying is an utter waste of time, we *do* something in prayer. We are a self-originating cause; and every cause, by definition, has an effect. Our petition, even our praise, changes the course of events to some degree.

4. *Prayer always changes the one who prays.* Whether the effect be good or bad cannot be concluded without concrete knowledge of the specific situation, but the effect is inevitable. This is only to express a commonplace regarding the nature of personality: that all experiences are added to the total life of the experient, altering him in some measure. Most prayers are authentic; they increase strength, insight, patience, love, devotion and the other qualities of character which Christian experience has declared to be good. Occasionally a selfish or cruel prayer will have an immediate unhealthy effect. Or if prayer is a mere substitute for personal responsible action, it may result in weakness, not strength. Some effect, however, must surely occur, tingling and altering the whole complex of the petitioner's self.

5. *Prayer changes God's knowledge and power (but not His goodness) relative to the petitioner.* So far we have been on solid ground; the present assumption would arouse more debate. Prayer is, at heart, petition. While in its broadest definition prayer includes adoration and confession, its essence is the petition, which is seldom absent even from prayers which are, in the main, acts of praise. It is an unfortunate confusion to assert that prayer is *any* communication whatsoever addressed to God. One could hate God and communicate defiance. Prayer is a special kind of communication, in full form (as in the Lord's Prayer) including adoration and confession while remaining at its essential core petitionary.

The personal petition of the individual is an asking, addressed to God, in which it is assumed that God is the giver and man the recipient. Every petition expresses a lack; the world is not as we wish it to be; more truth, health, peace and love are needed. If we believe there is plenty of these already, the prayer is absurd. We must believe that God also wants the world to be different, and that our prayerful communication with Him is a means of bringing about the

desired end. But God, under the conditions He has chosen, is already doing His part to its maximum. Why, then, should we appeal to Him to do more?

The prayerful appeal is intelligible only if it signalizes a real change in the God-man relationship. We know that it changes the pray-er. But the nature of prayer is an address to God, an asking that He do more than He has previously done. This implies a change in God too, either in his power, wisdom or goodness. In the opinion of the present writer, God's goodness is perfect and cannot be increased, but His knowledge and power can be, under the conditions of free moral creatures which He has chosen to create. In the nature of real time and real change utterly new factors arise constantly, some of which are the private decisions of moral persons. By the very act of prayer, at the instant it is uttered, the petitioner declares himself ready to receive the gift of grace. He is free to accept or reject God; the prayer is his concrete act of acceptance. This is a new and unpredictable fact in his personal history, no matter how often he has performed similar acts before. At that concrete instant, God's knowledge is enhanced by this temporal fact, and His power to grant grace to this individual at this moment is increased. If the world is perfect, or if God will not act to improve it, the prayer is useless. God awaits the prayer, which is integral to the petitioners personal and originative act of acceptance of God, before He knows that the petitioner is *then* ready and in that concrete way. God then exerts the power of grace in accordance with the opening of the individual person to the reception of His power.

6. *Intercessory prayer must do its work through a divine spiritual matrix.* To have any relevant effect, intercession should bring about changes in (a) the one who prays and/or (b) God and/or (c) the person interceded for. Since intercession is a form of petition, we see at once that the intercessor is altered by the prayer, and God is altered relative to the intercessor. However, the point of intercession is to improve the condition of the one interceded for, not the intercessor. Here the problem arises. For we must believe that God at every moment is "doing His best," under the conditions He has chosen, for the intercessee. If we do not believe this, we have a God who wilfully withholds His goodness from His creatures. A God worthy of worship always, at all times, in every conceivable manner, acts for the best. Therefore the intercession cannot have the same direct person-to-Person effect on God relative to the intercessee that it has relative to the intercessor. The intercessee has made no moral decision by virtue of the intercession; he may know nothing about it. He may be distant, unconscious, utterly hard of heart, quite unable to act for himself as the petitioner acts in petitionary prayer. As intercessee he is passive, not originative of spiritual action. Yet if the intercessee is unchanged by the prayer, God is unchanged relative to the intercessee, for God already knows the intercessee's need even better than we, and is already acting toward him with maximum power and wisdom. The action of intercessory prayer cannot go through God strictly on the person-to-Person basis.

What then, must be assumed if intercession is valid? This: that there is a spiritual matrix in which all our souls rest, a communicative web or bond, so that thoughts are conveyed effectively from one mind to another, and prayer for another is a means of changing the other so that God can act more beneficially toward him.

This view raises two new problems. First, our intercessions are made to God; they are not framed as forms of telepathy or thought-control after the manner of scientific experiments in extrasensory perception. We pray to *God* to act relative to the intercessee. Second, the assumption of the spiritual matrix opens the whole possibility of evil in-

fluence by means of it. Can we not use this mysterious medium to wage a mental war of hate and destruction? This brings us to our final assumption.

7. *The matrix itself is God in one aspect of His total activity,* in what we might call the lower reaches of His immanence. It is God's creative power operating in the shadowy realm between materiality and the full light of consciousness. Therefore the intercessory appeal to God can still be valid, since the spiritual matrix is a derivative from, or expression of, the Person confronted more directly in personal petition. Because the matrix is divine, it accords with the goodness of God. Health, harmony, life, truth, joy are conveyed by it; hate, evil, falsehood and death are filtered out.

It should be re-iterated that these are the assumptions of prayer. If prayer is valid, these presuppositions may reasonably undergird it. The validity itself must be tested on more empirical grounds, in the very act of praying, as Christian practice has been doing through the centuries—and still does.

Autumn 1955

Recommended Reading List of the Associates in Reading of the Department of the Ministry, Congregational Christian Churches

Report of the Chairman

The Rev. Lawrence L. Durgin

AT practically every meeting of your Associates in Reading, there is considerable discussion on two points connected with a minister's program of reading. Since the discussion is reflected in the final selections only occasionally, and since we are all convinced of their vital importance, it seems appropriate to mention them in this introductory note.

The first reflects a concern that the minister, inundated with current books, overlooks the classics. The content of these "classics" is somewhat vaguely defined, but they would cover the Greek Tragedians: Aechylus, Euripides, Sophocles and the rest. Then we ask ourselves how long it has been since we have re-read our Shakespeare and our Chaucer. What about John Donne? "The Divine Comedy" is a good study project for a summer or the year. And, while you are doing it, treat yourself to Dorothy Sayer's new book. In her book, *Introductory Papers on Dante,* this writer of mystery stories, who is also one of the brilliant apologists of Christianity today, has portrayed the poet-theologian as being as relevant as next Sunday's sermon and perhaps more so.

The second recurrent discussion concerns the importance of contemporary material outside the field of religion—narrowly defined; and we do not mean that the *Reader's Digest* or *Time Magazine,* or even the Book Club Selections will suffice. This discussion does reflect itself in our final selections from time to time. In this issue, for instance, you have two books and a publication which fall in the category: the books by Lippmann and Oppenheimer and the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists.* The importance of this "outside reading" became particularly clear to us at our last meeting where Kenneth Underwood of Wesleyan University referred to Political Scientists and Economists who were doing pioneer work in their fields which speaks meaningfully to the problem of the Christian Faith in our time and circumstance. Most of us had never heard of the men mentioned and all of us were a little abashed to think of how quickly we become dated in related fields by our pre-occupation with books more obviously relevant to our discipline. We were helped to realize anew that we are the People of the Incarnation—proclaiming the Gospel to the world and that for this task we can never know enough of the Gospel, but neither can we know too much about the world.

As we make our resolutions for study during the coming year, perhaps we should include a classic and two or three solid books in one of the social or natural sciences.

The Associates are always eager to hear from you concerning the selections they make and the program they attempt to carry forth.

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY: AN ECUMENICAL APPROACH, by Walter M. Horton, Harper, $3.75.

It is appropriate that a theologian as ecumenical in spirit as Horton of Oberlin should attempt the balanced and definitive work in contemporary theology so needed in our day.

The book is, of course, a survey because it covers the whole field of theology and the whole gamut of theological approach. At the same time there is no attempt at easy resolution which might strive to defy reality. Each chapter, whether it be on God and Man, Christ the Saviour, The Church and the Means of Grace or Christian Hope, contains a candid section on "Unresolved Issues."

Ministers and thoughtful laymen have in this book something which might be called, advisedly, a God-given opportunity for a refresher course in Contemporary Theology as well as a valuable reference book for a number of years to come.

THE PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY, by Walter Lippmann, Little Brown, $3.50.

If you want to understand the heart of the public questions of our day in America you will need to read this book. The author has a genius for dealing with important issues directly and upon the basis of serious ethical consideration and full investigation. Skillfully analyzing the sudden deterioration of democracy, he discusses the pressure of mass public opinion and points out the futility of democratic forms unless vitalized by a revival of the neglected public philosophy. "In the crisis within the Western Society, there is at issue now the mandate of heaven—." A stimulating, provocative and forward-looking book.

THE RENEWAL OF MAN, by Alexander Miller, Doubleday and Company, $2.95.

This is the first volume in the Christian Faith Series of which Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr is the consulting editor.

Dr. Miller has written a scholarly and understandable and it can well be, an acceptable interpretation of the doctrine of Justification by Faith.

Starting with three interesting characters on the current scene, Arthur Koestler, Graham Greene and Robert Penn Warren to indicate the present state of mind and morals, he indicates the need for both an answer and also a way.

Out of the vigor of the reformation and guided by the insights of Luther, Calvin and their successors he develops his view of the Christian calling and of the true Catholic Church.

The book is an excellent presentation of a strong orthodoxy for the mind of today.

OTHERWORLDLINESS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT, by Amos N. Wilder, Harper and Brothers, $1.75.

As Amos Wilder comes to the Harvard Divinity School, he brings that maturity of scholarship and experience in the application of the Gospel to life which this book so well demonstrates. One finds here an elaboration of William Temple's thesis that Christianity is the world's most materialistic religion. The danger of our time in "overspiritualizing" life instead of dealing with its realities in the flesh and society prodingly stimulates all whose task is the conversion of man to Christ.

With careful attention to an evaluation of current schools of New Testament thought, the words of its books come alive in such sentences as "To talk about the Kingdom of God, the Messiah, the Saviour, was to use words that were banners and fuses and sparks."

THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST, by The Bishop of Chichester (G. K. A. Bell), Penguin Books, Baltimore, D. C. Heath and Company, Boston (distributors), 50c.

History of the modern ecumenical movement delightfully and thoughtfully told by one of its chief architects and most beloved leaders, the Bishop of Chichester, honorary president of the World Council of Churches. Temple, Brown, Soderblom and other "giants" live on its pages through the author's joy in their memory.

THE CHURCH SPEAKS TO THE WORLD. *The Social Teachings of Leo XIII,* by Gilson, Ed., Doubleday Image Books, 95c.

In an inexpensive volume are collected the most important social doctrines of contemporary Roman Catholicism, dealing with civil government, capital and labor, marriage, socialism (Marxist variety) and democracy. Those who would seek to understand the strength and weakness of the Roman Catholic Church could find no better authoritative work than this.

A LAYMAN'S GUIDE TO PROTESTANT THEOLOGY, by William Hordern, Macmillan, $3.50.

Don't be deceived by the title, this book is thorough enough for ministers. It is an adequate survey of orthodoxy, liberalism, fundamentalism, and neo-orthodoxy. The historical development of the various traditions is briefly but carefully outlined. It will furnish the basis not only for a review of current theological trends, but also act as a spring-board for many an hour's earnest discussion. In the scope of the short bibliography you will find sufficient aids for further study.

THE EARLY CHURCH AND THE COMING GREAT CHURCH, by John Knox, Abingdon, $2.50.

A foremost New Testament scholar explores the unity and conflicts in early church and expounds the view that "what we seek (in the ecumenical task) is a fulfillment of an historical process, not the restoration of a particular historical situation." Both what was essential in the primitive Christianity of the first century and what was basic in the elaboration of creed, canon, and organization in the second century must be conserved and developed as Christians in the twentieth century come to terms with the problem and scandal of disunion.

RELIGION AND FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, by Messrs. Miller, Calhoun, Pusey, Niebuhr, Doubleday and Company, $1.00.

This small volume was prepared in commemoration of Columbia University's bi-centennial. It stresses the role of freedom of thought in the liberal tradition in education, in which religion has always played a vital part. A pertinent answer to those who sense danger in freedom of intellect and speech. The material herein is particularly timely.

THE SELF AND THE DRAMAS OF HISTORY, by Reinhold Niebuhr, Scribners, $3.75.

Here Niebuhr applies Buber's "I—Thou" philosophy to an examination of the self, the underlying structures of reality and society. It has the merit of being more readable than many of the author's previous works, and the demerits of being, perhaps, overly critical of "non-Biblical" approaches to the same subject. Recommended for those who have not encountered Niebuhr; for those who know him it will not seem very new.

SCIENCE AND THE COMMON UNDERSTANDING, by J. Robert Oppenheimer, Simon and Schuster, $2.75.

This is not an easy book to read, especially for those whose education lies outside the House of Science—but it is a most rewarding one. Carefully read and pondered, it will do more to arouse the dormant hopes of men than many superficially cheerful volumes. The accents on a world of human comity (where "we have come to be brothers second by being children first") and on human limitation and diversities and freedom are unforgettable.

THE NEW BEING, by Paul Tillich, Scribners, $2.75.

After the publication of *The Shaking of the Foundations,* Paul Tillich became well-known as a great preacher. Now we have a companion volume of twenty-four expository sermons which will also be read and re-read by people who normally do not read books of sermons.

BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, 5750 Ellis Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, $5.00 per year.

This monthly magazine for science and public affairs is for laymen and deals with the political and moral problems of atomic power. The special issue of April, 1955 ($1.00 single copy) is devoted to a discussion of "Secrecy, Security, and Loyalty," as seen by the scientific community directly involved in our security program.

OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE SECOND ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, Harper Brothers, $5.00.

This will be the standard volume for reference and discussion of the current ecumenical movement for the next five years. Official reports and papers on all aspects of the World Council of Churches as adopted at the Second World Assembly at Evanston.

The Committe of Associates in Reading

Lawrence L. Durgin, *Chairman*
20 Diman Place, Providence, R. I.

Kenneth O. Eaton, *Secretary*
14 Park Street, Saint Johnsbury, Vt.

Robert G. Armstrong, Connecticut
William L. Bradley, Connecticut
Fred S. Buschmeyer, New York
Richard P. Carter, Connecticut
Charles L. Copenhaver, New Jersey
James F. English, Connecticut
Rolland G. Ewing, Connecticut
Johnson A. Haines, New Hampshire
John A. Martin, Massachusetts
George G. Parker, New York
Albert J. Penner, New York
Clifford O. Simpson, Connecticut
Tertius van Dyke, Connecticut
Arthur E. Wilson, Providence

New Pilgrim Hymnbook

The Rev. Frederic Fox

Williamstown, Mass.

THE first book printed in America was a hymnbook. It was called *The Bay Psalm Book* and it was printed for the churches of Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1640.

About twenty-five years later, this hymnbook was revised and since then, every generation has revised the hymnbook. We like to sing our own hymns, in our own words, although some hymns are classics and are used over and over again by every generation.

Among the "classic" hymns is "O God, our Help in Ages Past" (by Isaac Watts, a lively Congregationalist). It is No. 177 in the present *Pilgrim Hymnal* and it was the first hymn chosen by the committee which now is revising the *Pilgrim Hymnal.* It was also a paraphrase of No. 90 in the *Bay Psalm Book* (the 90th Psalm) which has been sung by every generation back to the Hebrews long before the Christian era.

The Bay Psalm Book was limited to English tunes and English translations of the Hebrew Psalms. That is a far cry from the present *Pilgrim Hymnal* which, like most other things in America, has been greatly enriched by words and tunes from all over the world. It is a good illustration of the "melting pot" culture of America and the new *Pilgrim Hymnal* will be more so. It will show the changes which have taken place in America's world outlook between 1931 (when the present P. H. was published) and 1957 (when the new P. H. will appear).

For example, the present Hymnal contains hymns from most of the countries of Western Europe—including a few from behind the now "Iron Curtain" like No. 384, "God the All-Merciful," which was written for the Russian Imperial Choir. But the new *Pilgrim Hymnal* will try to include some hymns from the "Afro-Asian" bloc. There are some hauntingly beautiful hymns from the young churches of South Africa, South India, Korea and Japan. One of our source-books is *CANTATE DOMINO,* the hymnbook of the World's Student Christian Federation published in Geneva.

For the first time in history, the *Pilgrim Hymnal* will overcome a shameful oversight by drawing on the deep spiritual hymns of the American Negros. Two hymns of this type have already been chosen by the New Hymnal Committee: "Were You There?" for the PASSION section and "Let Us Break Bread Together" for the COMMUNION section.

But the "new" Hymnal will probably be "older" than the present Hymnal; that is, the new Hymnal will probably contain more classic hymns than the present Hymnal. The present Hymnal is heavy with hymns from the 19th Century which most sacred musicians feel was the worst century for hymns. "During the Victorian era, hymnody multiplied itself and cheapened itself almost beyond recall," says Erik Routley, the leading hymn editor of today.

The new Hymnal will drop many of the 19th Century hymns with their "barbershop harmonies" and excessively personal and sentimental texts. Among these might be No. 505, "Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling." It will be hard to let this hymn go. It has many deep personal associations but it cannot be compared to Harry Emerson Fosdick's "God of Grace and God of Glory" set to the stirring Welsh tune CWM RHONDDA which so many people

have suggested we include in the new Hymnal.

The new Hymnal will be more "ecumenical" than the last. Even now, in our present Hymnal, over 25% of our hymns are shared with the other major Protestant hymnbooks. Hymns like No. 391, "The Church's One Foundation," and No. 1, "Holy, Holy, Holy," and No. 141, "Crown Him the Son of God," are also sung by the Baptist, Disciple, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Evangelical-Reformed Churches. The latest hymnbooks of these churches are being consulted by the New Hymnal Committee so the new *Pilgrim Hymnal* will be even more ecumenical.

It will surprise some Protestants to know that the three hymns listed above are also sung in the Roman Catholic Church. A recent survey in New York City showed that there was a lively traffic in hymns between the Roman and Protestant Churches. As most people know, that old favorite, No. 220, "Faith of Our Fathers," was written by an Irish Catholic suffering under Protestant persecution. The original text had to be considerably amended for American Protestant use.

The Jewish tradition is also adding richness to our Hymnal. Besides the original psalms, we have borrowed No. 176, "The God of Abraham Praise," from the Jews. It was written by Daniel Ben Judah in the 14th Century and set to an old Hebrew melody. We hope to find more great hymns like this one.

This borrowing from other traditions and other nations is symbolic of a change in the missionary and patriotic sections of our new Hymnal. The Congregational Hymnals have had a tendency to be overly "patriotic" . . . perhaps because we came to America aboard the Mayflower. In the present Hymnal, our patriotic section is twice as large as other comparable hymnals, e. g., the Presbyterian. Now, this section will be cut down considerably and even No. 357, the "Star Spangled Banner," will be dropped because it is more of a patriotic song than a hymn. We proudly display the American flag in our sanctuary, but we do not wave it in front of the Cross.

But No. 345, "America," will remain, and so will No. 350, "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies," and many others. However, the tone will be less "flag-waving" and more like the present No. 348, "O God of earth and altar, bow down to hear our cry; our earthly rulers falter, our people drift and die; the walls of gold entomb us, the swords of scorn divide; take not Thy thunder from us, but take away our pride."

Another section which shows its age is the section of hymns of BROTHERHOOD, JUSTICE and SOCIAL SERVICE. Both in vocabulary and optimism, many of these hymns are "dated." Perhaps the great progress since 1931 in social legislation has made us feel it is no lonper necessary to sing about "people crying in cot and mine and slum" as John Haynes Holmes did in 1913 (No. 337, "The Voice of God Is Calling"). Perhaps the Church of 1955 is too prosperous to sing about the "haunts of wretchedness and lures of greed" as Franklin Mason North did in 1903 (No. 140, "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life").

At least, we are too realistic today to sing serenely with John Greenleaf Whittier No. 317's: "and step by step since time began, we see the steady gain of man." Nor can we raise our voices so confidently as Alfred Lord Tennyson as he sings in No. 381: "When we hear the war drum throb no longer, see the battle flags all furled, in the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World."

So some of these hymns will be edited or eliminated. It will be important, however, to replace them with new hymns of social concern. We cannot be cynical about the hopes of tomorrow or complacent about the needs of today. The Committee will welcome new hymns in this section.

The Place of the Association

The Rev. Robert G. Armstrong

Hartford, Connecticut

THE New Haven East Consociation is the last of that name in Connecticut. But what's in a name? Dr. Sherrod Soule, of revered memory, speaking at the 225th Anniversary of the New Haven East Consociation in 1934, upheld the old title, saying: "Consociation is a strong, distinctive, dignified term. It lends itself appropriately to ecclesiastical procedure. Association can mean anybody or anything, good, bad, or indifferent. Conference is a weak sister in the family of titles. Council stands the test of time but it is by no means confined to church affairs. Consociation qualifies for the role of 'Ancient and Honorable.'"

Be that as it may, the New Haven East Consociation conducts itself as any Association within the State. Its constitution does not differ materially from the constitution of any Association with which I am familiar.

Let us go back into the history of our fellowship, back to the Cambridge Synod, back to our own Saybrook Synod and Platform, and the resultant effects of both, to give you enough background for what I want to emphasize as to the place of the Association today.

Dr. Frederick L. Fagley said on the occasion of the 300th Anniversary of the meeting of the Cambridge Synod: "The central question the Cambridge Synod faced was whether or not these self-governing churches should continue each under the direct leadership of Christ or should be governed by some human agency beyond or over them." And he continued: "One issue involved in this question was whether or not a church council or synod, either called by individual churches or 'invited' by the General Court, as was this Cambridge Synod, had the power to rule the churches. On this issue the Synod gave an emphatic 'no.'"

The issue was fundamentally that of the official establishment of a national church in this country. From the evils of such a church these ministers had sought to escape. The demands in that Synod for the rights of the individual churches led inevitably to the demands for democracy in this land which reached full fruition in the Declaration of Independence and the successful culmination of the American Revolution.

As a result, in Massachusetts the Consociation never found any rootage. The Association sprang up with its earliest example, as you well know, when the Salem church invited delegates from the Plymouth church to assist it in the re-ordination of the two Episcopally ordained ministers who had come over from England to be pastor and teacher of the Salem church. The fellowship of the churches was recognized but not the authority of a synod or consociation. Local autonomy is the word.

Of course there was much more behind the Cambridge Synod than this over-simplified statement would indicate. There was the grappling with forces and factors that were still lurking in the background and prejudicing the powers that still held sway in Old England. The maintenance of the right to conduct their churches in their own

way without interference held political implications of which they were well aware and which they, with consummate astuteness, worked their way around. Democracy was not a word in their vocabulary but democracy was silently at work in Cambridge in 1648.

The Saybrook Synod was a cat of another color. Following the death of Thomas Hooker, the old First Church of Hartford had been rocked by dissension between its two ministers, pastor and teacher, and the taking of sides on the part of the congregation. The General Court tried to solve the difficulties by appointing special committees to confer and to advise but with little result. Finally the General Court "ordered," not "invited," a Synod to be held to devise ways and means of unifying the churches. The result was the Saybrook Synod, held in 1708. Its conclusions were that synods should be formed throughout the Colony of churches within convenient geographical areas, usually the then county lines. No church could be organized without the consent of the Synod, no minister called, ordained or dismissed. Connecticut was Presbyterianized. As Dr. Soule stated: "The Saybrook Platform framed in 1708, containing civil and ecclesiastical authority, had for its intent and purpose the tethering of Congregationalism to the stake of orthodoxy for all time. Doctrine was defined, dogmatized and decreed. Denominational discipline and practice were to be united and unquestioned. The Corporation was to be close, copper-riveted and self-perpetuating."

The General Court accepted the findings of the Synod and wrote them into the law of the Colony. The Congregational Church became, to all intents and purposes, a State Church. But the General Court tacked on a proviso which was later to cause much trouble. With one eye on old England and the other on the charter of the Colony, and mindful of criticisms which were rife in England against the intolerance of the churches, the General Court had previously written into the law certain provisions for dissenting sects, such as Baptist and Quaker. The proviso continued in force this act of toleration. It eventually was to mean the wiping out of all the conditions of the Saybrook Synod.

Consociations were formed of churches and delegates or "messengers," as they were sometimes called. Alongside the Consociations were the Associations composed of ministers alone and which guarded particularly ministerial standing. In all fairness it must be said that the Consociation saved Connecticut from the Unitarian divisions that plagued Massachusetts.

Slowly the Consociations gave way to the Associations composed of churches and ministers with their greater emphasis upon independence, the autonomy of the local church. In time the Association of Ministers passed the care of ministerial standing over to the Association of Ministers and Churches and itself all but passed out of the picture.

Have we outgrown even the modified Association?

I do not think so. To my mind the Association is the heart of our Congregational fellowship. It should be the heart, pumping through the fellowship the life blood that renews and invigorates the body of our churches. The State Conference, the General Council, with their various committees and commissions, may well be in the position of specialists diagnosing the condition of the heart, advising, suggesting, but never taking its place. In our government and in our churches I fear we have surrendered too much in the trend toward centralization of power. We have let the heart grow weak from lack of a normal and required exercise of its function.

We need the Association as long as we are free and independent churches. But, as I said to a Roman Catholic seeking admission into our Church; "It is much harder to be a good Congrega-

tionalist than a good Roman Catholic." Every freedom involves a responsibility or it degenerates into license. A benevolent, wise totalitarianism might produce better government from the top down but it has never produced better citizens with a sense of personal responsibility.

It has been my experience in forty years in the ministry that in those Associations where the sense of fellowship was strong, where there was a real concern for the welfare of each and all, the individual churches prospered and grew, the stronger churches helped the weaker ones and were blessed in the helping. Where the Association was weak and the sense of fellowship was almost nil, then weakness produced weakness.

Understanding, mutual sharing, contact, oneness of purpose are developed through fellowship. The Association provides a unit that is usually closely knit together by historic, economic and social ties. One of the main emphases found in my historical researches into Congregational history here in Connecticut has been that placed upon the local church of a sense of responsibility for its sister churches in the vicinity. One of the principal tasks of the first State Missionary or Superintendent of the Connecticut Home Missionary Society was to stir up the churches to take an active interest in and to be helpful to the churches nearby that were weak and often pastorless. This he did by appealing to the Associations to be watchful over their own areas. And even today no church can receive aid from the State Conference without the approval of the Committee on Grants of the local Association.

The strength of an Association rests in the sense of responsibility of its officers and committees. They should never be mere rubber stamps for suggestions coming down from above. They should weigh carefully all suggestions and take the initiative in making new and better suggestions gained from an intimate contact with the local churches. The National Council cannot know our churches and their needs and abilities as well as can the State Conference. The Conference welcomes the grass-roots suggestions and earnestly seeks them through its committees and Board of Directors. It is exceedingly important that the Associations develop leaders with insights and backgrounds who may be recommended to the vacancies on the Board of Directors and on the various committees. The best servants of the churches, whether on national commissions and boards or in our Conference set-up, are those who have been tested and not found wanting in the responsibilities of office in the Association. The Association justifies itself as a training school for the work of the larger fellowship.

Most of the organizations of which we have a right to be proud grew out of a felt need within an Association or at least a vicinage of churches, as did the American Missionary Society, springing up to meet the needs of the Negroes on the slave-ship *Amistad*. The churches along the Connecticut shore met that need.

An excellent example of the stimulation that the churches can receive through the Association is the rapid and astounding growth of the Schools of Churchmanship held each year for our laymen. The Laymen's Committee of the New London Association, for example, saw the possibility, went to work, and in three or four years built up an attendance that culminated in over three hundred for the final meeting of 1954-1955 to hear an address on "Beliefs That Matter." The results have reverberated among the churches of that Association. Men have come out to church as never before. No longer is it true that men hold their religion in their wives' names. They have accepted responsibilities they had refused before. No longer is it true that only the women can get out large delegations from the churches for meetings of instruction and inspiration.

This is only one example of what initiative and energy can do through an Association.

Again, the Association has done much to secure an orderliness in our procedures, not by mandates from above, but by weighing suggestions that have come down from consecrated, devoted fellow Congregationalists concerned about the fellowship of the churches. Many a man has been ordained out of courtesy to the church because the appetizing odor of coffee dulled the sense of fitness. Many of the Associations, through their own Committees on the Ministry, have recommended that the examination for ordination take place several days before the act of ordination. It is not a mandate but a suggestion which has been thought well of by name Associations. Such suggestions can be made, discussed and accepted within the fellowship of the Association, when, probably, if handed down to the local churches alone, they would be ignored.

We are still a fellowship of churches, free and independent, but we are not a rope of sand. Our freedom gives us the opportunity to meet known needs quickly. The needs we see bind us together in our fellowship that we may meet them. We are not bound by an institutionalism that slows action. Again I say, the Association is the heart of our fellowship. How strongly that heart beats depends upon the sense of fellowship of the churches.

A Service of Dedication on the Installation of an Organ *

The Rev. Reuben A. Stauss
Versailles, Ohio

PASTOR: *In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we dedicate this organ to its important part and place in Christian worship.*

PEOPLE: God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

PASTOR: *Then He took a little child and placed him in their midst . . . and said, Whosoever receives one such child in my name receives me.*

PEOPLE: We dedicate this organ to happy and glorious childhood.

PASTOR: *Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*

PEOPLE: We dedicate this organ to youth, that it may heighten their joy in noble living.

PASTOR: *All souls are mine, says the Lord.*

PEOPLE: We dedicate this organ to the development of souls, that its soft and melodious tones may be a comfort to the distressed, vision to the bewildered, and a consolation to the bereaved.

PASTOR: *Let this organ add to the beauty and effectiveness of prayer.*

PEOPLE: The strains of rich melodies shall be wings to our prayers, causing them to rise to the throne of God.

PASTOR: *We think of the multitudes of people who will join us in worship and fellowship.*

PEOPLE: Let this organ serve to inspire good will and love in our Christian fellowship.

PASTOR: *Music is a universal language, easily understood by all peoples.*

PEOPLE: Let the harmonies of this organ add to the peace among nations, beginning in our midst, spreading to our homes, and to our nation, until the kingdom of God shall come in all its glory.

PASTOR: *Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God will all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.*

PEOPLE: Let the beautiful harmonies of this organ symbolize the relationship of ourselves to God and our fellowmen.

PASTOR: *Let this beautiful organ be a continual reminder of those who have gone before us.*

PEOPLE: We dedicate this organ in grateful memory of our loved ones. May the faith of those who have led the way, be an inspiration to our faith.

PASTOR: *Thus we dedicate this organ in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. By faith in Him we have passed from death unto life, and are creatures of the eternal ages, in possession of life eternal.*

PEOPLE: This organ shall be a fore-taste of heavenly music, enriched by the choirs of angels, welcoming the weary pilgrims of the night to their Father's House, where they shall dwell forevermore.

---

* This Service of Dedication was used on the occasion of the Installation of the Allen Organ at the Congregational Christian Church, Versailles, Ohio. The author points out that departing from the usual dedication service, here the pastor merely states the objective, the people then make the consecration.

When Thou Shalt Be Old

The Rev. Louis Hieb

Ponca, Nebraska

IN a memorable conversation at an early morning breakfast by the seashore—a breakfast at which the risen Lord Jesus was the host—Simon Peter had vehemently protested his love for the Master, who had thrice searchingly demanded of him, "Lovest thou Me?" Upon Peter's last affirmative answer with its qualifying, "Thou knowest all things," the Master said to him: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young thou girdest thyself and walkest whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldst not!"

That is inevitable, inexorable, "When thou shalt be old"; "When the years steal fire from the mind and vigor from the limbs"; when we no longer carry the ball down the field, but must be content to sit on the side lines and hurrah for the younger contestants; when we no longer do as we please but must tote along as another directs, or carry us where we do not wish to go! The compelling force may not be an individual who bosses us around; we may be cabin'd cribbed, and confined, or driven, by circumstances over which we have no control.

What shall we do about it? What shall be our attitude when old and feeble we are compelled to go not just one mile or two of the difficult journey, but on, on, indefinitely, with perhaps undesirable company?

First and last: Accept the inevitable. It was reported of Margaret Fuller that she said, "I accept the universe." And that the gruff Thomas Carlyle retorted, "Egad, she'd better!" Yes, we had better accept the inevitable and believe that "circumstances over which we have no control are God's will for us."

St. Paul wrote to his Philippian friends, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Recall that when the Apostle wrote these words he was in Caesar's prison house in Rome. He could hear the tramp of the armed guard without; he knew not whether the hour would bring him release from prison, or to be lead out to his execution. But either way, he assured his friends, the outcome was in the hand, not of Nero, but of God his Father. "Another shall gird thee," but the hand that girds is yet subject to the will of God. And though we be carried whither we would not, still shall we not be carried beyond our heavenly Father's love and care. We may not understand the plot of the drama, but we may have faith that "it is God though with a hidden hand that shifts the scenery and thrusts the actors on and off the stage."

Recall the experience of the French mystic, Madame Guyon. Banished from her home and family, she wrote:

"My Lord, how full of sweet content
I spend my years of banishment.
Where'er I dwell, I dwell with Thee:
In heaven, on earth, or on the sea.
To me remains nor place nor time;
My country is in every clime.
I can be calm and free from care
On any shore, since God is there!"

"While place we seek, or place we shun
The soul finds happiness in none;
But with a God to guide our way
'Tis equal joy to go or stay.
Could I be cast where Thou art not,
That were indeed a dreadful lot;
But regions none remote I call,
Secure of finding God in all."

Contrast that experience with the gifted Lord Byron, who wrote when only thirty-six years of age:

"My days are in the seer and yellow leaf
The flowers and fruits of love are gone—
The worm, the canker and the grief,
Are mine alone!"

There is a scripture which says "We shall all fade as doth a leaf." But we need not fade "seer and yellow," a dirty gray or a crumbling brown. Some months ago *Reader's Digest* published an article on "Leaves" by the botanist Don Peattie. In referring to the autumn colors, the reds, the orange, the mauve . . . and the why of the change from green, the author says, "Frost has nothing to do with it. It is the leaves themselves which end their own lives in this blaze of glory!"

I recalled the "sugaring parties" which the young people of Vermont were wont to stage during those early spring days when the warm sun started the sap in the maples, which again was checked by the frost of the night, apparently a necessary combination for the best maple syrup. The trees which exuded sweetness and happiness in the spring, were the trees whose leaves "ended their own lives full of glory" in the fall.

Your experiences "when thou shalt be old," will depend considerably on life "when thou wast young!" Ralph Waldo Emerson sings:

"I trim myself to the storms of time:
I man the rudder, reef the sail;
Obey the voice at eve, obeyed at prime.
Lowly, faithful, banish fear
Right onward drive unharmed;
The port, well worth the cruise is near
And every wave is charmed."

So, let us go with Browning as he sings:

"Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be:
The last of life for which
The first was made.
My times are in His hands,
Who saith 'a whole I planned'
Youth sees but half; trust God
God; see all, nor be afraid."

A Minister Appeals to His People

The Rev. Gordon C. Speer
Ypsilanti, Michigan

IN the Book of Exodus the 17th chapter is the story of a battle between the Israelites and the Amalekites. Moses appointed Joshua to command the forces of Israel and he, Moses, would pray while the soldiers fought. The story says: "So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill."

"Moses prayed." In this case he did not get down on his knees to pray. At first he did not sit down while he prayed. He stood up. And here is the first sig-

nificant point: he prayed with one hand uplifted. Whether right hand or left hand we do not know.

Then something happened. Something always happens when we pray. So long as Moses kept his hand upraised, the forces of Israel prevailed. But when he got tired, or his hand got tired, and it dropped by his side, the forces of the enemy prevailed.

His two friends noting that once in a while the hand of Moses dropped to his side, worked out a plan. They had Moses sit down on a stone and they, one on one side of him and the other on the other side, held up his hands for him. And his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Israel, or we should say, "God and Israel won a mighty victory that day."

And Moses built an Altar as a Memorial of that victory.

It is strange teaching to our modern ears. Certainly it would not be easy for us to accept all of the implications of the story. But there is one thought here, a sort of religious peg, upon which to hang a thought.

It is where it is written that the two men, Aaron and Hur, held up the hands of their religious Leader, and because of this there was success.

So I say to you this morning: "Hold up my hands." I mean, pray for me and pray with me that God may work through us.

One of the great preachers of yesterday was Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He helped to move thousands of people in England and the United States toward God and the Christian life. When he spoke thousands listened. Strangely it was not what he said. For what he said differed little from the sermons of many other preachers of his day. It was not how he said things.

But he had power, spiritual power. One day someone askcd him to state the secret of his power. He replied, "While I am speaking there are six hundred of my people on their knees praying for me."

While Spurgeon preached, these praying members of his Church were gathered in a Lower Room—God hears prayers in Lower Rooms as well as in Upper Rooms—these people in that Prayer Room were holding up the hands of their Pastor in prayer.

Am I asking too much of you when I say: "Hold up my hands?" I know you would be willing to do many things for me. You have done many very beautiful things for me and for the loved ones in our Parsonage Home.

Are you willing to pray for me that God may use my preaching and my pastoral service to the glory of God and the helping of many people?

When you say your prayers, night and morning, pray for me. When you come to church, bow your head and pray for the ones who worship here and for the ones who minister here.

If you do, powers of guidance and healing and inspiration will appear in the preaching and in the pastoral service that were not there before.

It will not be power from me alone, because I have studied more or have obeyed the laws of spiritual culture more faithfully. No, the power will be from God. And you will be the blessed Aarons and Hurs who have been used by God to bring the power from "on High" through the hands and the lips and the personality of a plain preacher.

Think of the ones who through the years have held up our hands. And thank God for them. The holy prophets, past and present, who brought us the sure Word of God, the friendly pastors and priests of the church who shared with us as we walked through the shadowed valleys; the poets who penned immortal songs that cheered our souls; the loving parents who taught us of the Babe of Bethlehem and the Christ of Calvary; the brothers and sisters, the husband, the wife, the blessed children who loved us and helped us and wished us well. All of these and others have held up our hands and kept hope in our hearts. We are grateful to them.

Our second thought is crystal clear. As Moses prayed the two with him, Aaron and Hur probably also prayed. For prayer is contagious. Jesus said: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." In such a group there is conversation with the Holy One. And that is prayer. And when people pray great things always happen.

Moses and Aaron and Hur praying, and the others fighting, wrought a victory for the right that day.

Writing to the members of the Christian Church in Corinth Paul said: "Let me have your cooperation in prayer." In the most earnest and sincere spirit I repeat that request to you. Let me have your cooperation in prayer. "Hold up my hands."

If you pray for me I will be a better minister of Jesus Christ, keener mentally and stronger spiritually.

And here is my pledge to you: as you pray for me I will pray for you. Then through this cooperative praying there will be created not merely a community of interest, but there will be created new energies in our midst that will work miracles among us.

Let us pray that God will use our Church in winning men and women and children to God and to a good life—a brave, friendly, generous, Christlike life.

The final word! Let *us* pray. The Psalmist said: "Let the people praise Thee, O God, let *all* the people praise Thee. Then God, even our own God will bless us."

Ministers of the Ministering Community

The Inaugural Address as Dean of Andover Newton Theological School

by

The Rev. Roy M. Pearson

IN the nearly one hundred and fifty years of their first separate and later corporate existence Andover Theological Seminary and Newton Theological Institution have trained approximately five hundred missionaries. During that same period they have graduated about six hundred men destined to be college presidents and professors. Chaplains, directors of religious education, and denominational officials have accounted for about six hundred others. But when the record turns to parish ministers, the figure rises sharply: it is almost six thousand.

Since it is probable that the experience of other theological schools in this country has been comparable to that of Andover Newton and that the principal task of these institutions may rightly be called the training of parish ministers, these figures immediately raise a question about the nature of the ministry for which these men and women are being trained. Assume that seminary students were called to be Christians before they were called to be ministers. Assume that they are right in believing that they have found in the profession of the ministry the best instrument for their vocation as Christians. What then do we expect them to do in the churches to which they will go when they have left the seminaries? What do the people of the churches need to have them do? How do they conceive their own ministry, and hence what will they be trying to do themselves? And most im-

portant of all, what does God actually call them to do?

It seems obvious, in the first place, that they are called to be intelligent and devout representatives of the ministerial profession and that for the assumption of this profession they must therefore be equipped with the knowledge, the attitudes, and the skills which contribute to its effective performance.

There are too many ministers who cannot preach, and it is the business of theological schools to train preachers. There are too many ministers who cannot teach, and it is the task of theological schools to produce teachers. There are too many ministers who cannot keep the army of the Lord in step and line, and it is the function of theological schools to provide church administrators. Pastors, counselors, leaders of worship, faithful witnesses of Christ in person and family and wider community—there are too many ministers who have failed in each of these areas, and whatever else a theological school may do or think its ministers should be, it is certainly charged with guiding professional men toward professional competence.

The uncle of Somerset Maugham was a clergyman. One of his curates had an extremely discordant voice but still insisted on singing with all his might whenever the church gathered for worship, and Maugham's uncle finally had to inform him that it would be to the greater glory of God if he praised Him only in his heart. Whatever other definitions may be used with regard to the ministry, it is hard to deny its position as one of the recognized professions in contemporary life, and one of the purposes of theological schools is to steer students toward such a relationship to that profession that the greater glory of God will be served rather by practice than by abstinence.

But the successful performance of his particular profession does not exhaust the vocation of the minister, and it is the function of theological schools, in the second place, so to train their students that they will be able to assist their congregations to find in their "secular" professions adequate channels for their own Christian vocation.

It is one of the principal tragedies of the church that the body of Christ is so frequently preoccupied with itself, and if it is actually true that God loves the world, there is often little evidence that the church has followed God's example. For the most part, its preaching is an engagement in talking to itself, its pastoral ministry a provision for taking care of its own needs, and its administrative procedures a plan to keep the lodgehouse operating smoothly. In far too many congregations most adults received into membership have come by intramural transfer from other Christian groups, and there is at least a superficial resemblance between this admittedly necessary process and the less covetable experience of the groceryman in Michigan who investigated a mysterious path worn between the front and back doors of his store and discovered that the two boys, who had been selling him cases of empty beer bottles, were getting their supply from his own storeroom. In fact, a cynical mind aware of God's primal intent for the church might reasonably respond to the church's insistence on the importance of its life and work with the question of a newsman covering the return of the tearful Marilyn Monroe to the cameras after her separation from Joe DiMaggio. "The show must go on," a studio spokesman had said with grim heroism, and the newsman's question was phrased in one word: "Why?"

It is the task of the minister to get the church as a fellowship out of the church as a building. It is the task of the minister to maintain the self-awareness of the church as much in daily labor as in weekly worship. It is the task of the minister to help other people to find in their own professions significant responsibility for the kingdom of God on the earth. And this approach

to vocation which it is the minister's task to encourage requires a new way of looking at familiar habits and duties.

Here, for example, is Nicholas Berdyaev saying: "Care for the life of another, even material, bodily care, is spiritual in essence. Bread for myself is a material question; bread for my neighbor is a spiritual question." Or here is Leslie Weatherhead declaring: "When we get more sense, we shall ordain shoemakers, and charwomen . . ., and maids. . . . We shall ordain bus drivers and railway men and carpenters and plumbers. . . . It was when Jesus had been a carpenter for twenty years and had never preached a single sermon, that the Voice said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Or take these words of William Temple: "The spiritually-minded man does not differ from the materially-minded man chiefly in thinking about different things, but in thinking about the same things differently. It is possible to think materially about God, and spiritually about food. . . . For the religious man is not only religious when he prays; his work is religiously done, his recreation religiously enjoyed, his food and drink religiously received." Or think of Elton Trueblood pointing out that the Bible story begins with emphasis on God as a worker and on man's creation in God's image. "If God is the Worker," he writes, "then men and women, in order to fulfill their potentialities, must be workers too. They are sharing in creation when they develop a farm, paint a picture, build a home or polish a floor."

Men are called to be Christians before they are called to be carpenters or teachers or taxi drivers, but unless they are also called to be carpenters and teachers and taxi drivers, it is highly probable that they were mistaken when they thought that they had been called as Christians. As long as the church permits itself to be confined to its buildings, the church is under suffocating siege and doomed at last to die, and the church's surest call today is to man an invasion of the world outside its own established territory. That invasion will be most productive at the point of lucrative employment and vocational commitment, and it is the task of theological schools so to train ministers that they can lead the church's forces out of their proudly steepled castles to attack the enemy where he really is—in the businesses, the schools, the courts, the homes, and the political offices. It is essential for theological schools to produce skilled preachers, warm-hearted pastors, and accomplished administrators; but unless they also produce vocational catalysts capable of transforming the occupations of men from means of gain into channels of worship, they are leading the church to save its life and thereby lose it.

Yet there are still other areas of importance in the training of ministers by theological schools, and one of the most essential concerns the apostolic succession.

The exact moment of the church's birth is still a debatable matter—perhaps when Jesus chose His first disciples, perhaps when those disciples first became aware of their enduring unity and common mission, perhaps at Pentecost. Whoever they were, however, those first members of the church—being listeners in our own sense of feeling the need to learn and hence going to the source of the knowledge we need, were none the less men with far wider purpose than simply listening. They were also speakers, doers, workers. They were heralds, witnesses, agents, apostles. "Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Jesus had commissioned the twelve disciples when He sent them out. "And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." The disciples took that charge seriously, and this is what the early church was like. By deed if not always in name its ordi-

nary members were apostles. They preached and taught; they persuaded, converted, aroused and healed. This was the proper business of the church, and they did the church's business.

The question now arises when the church received the right to change its charter and become a different kind of institution. Was it when the first twelve disciples became thirteen? Was it when they became thirteen hundred, or thirteen thousand, or thirteen million? The answer, of course, is that the church *never* received such a right. It simply drifted out of one way of thinking and living into another way of thinking and living. It merely degenerated slowly into a group of class-conscious people wherein the few did the preaching and the teaching while the many did the watching, the listening, and the waiting. And thus it happened in the course of the years that the church was cursed with a problem of unemployment which differed from the ordinary economic variety in that this was not an affair of workers crying for jobs but of jobs crying for workers. It became the common conception that the church's ministry was properly confined to those whom the church had ordained and that the rightful function of the laity was simply to make that ministry financially possible, and the church assumed the aspect of a football team which kept the players on the bench and sent out the coach to man in his own person all eleven places in the backfield and the line. Or the church began to look like a great throng of men standing around a woman struck down by an automobile which has come to a stop still resting on her body. The husband strains with frantic ineffectiveness to lift the car from his wife, but he does not ask the other men to help him, and they do not offer.

Of course, there is a considerable amount of lay ministry already in action—teachers in the church schools, sewers in the church vestries, deaconesses calling on the church's invalids, money-raisers for the mission boards, committee members intelligently working for Christian purposes, men and woman making dedication of themselves to Christ through political campaigns and social service. In the average church of a thousand members, however, it is probably true that there are eight hundred preachers who are not preaching, eight hundred pastors who are not exercising the pastoral function, eight hundred healers who are doing no healing, eight hundred witnesses who never witness.

There are many reasons for the church's failure at this point, and one of them is certainly the tacit assumption that being technically untrained for Christian ministry, laymen are therefore actually unfit for Christian ministry. But our values need a reassessment in this matter. Surely it is a questionable victory, for instance, when the carefully written prayer of a highly trained minister becomes such an achievement in literary perfection and such an implied example of what a prayer must be like to be truly a prayer that it shames other men into refraining from praying. The professional minister with professional training the church assuredly needs, but it is a sad day for the world if the good word for Christ's sake can be spoken and the good deed in Jesus' name can be done only by those who have the A.B. degree as their license and the B.D. degree for their megaphone.

There are so many thoughts that flood the mind when we shake off the encrustations of the ages in this field. One thinks, for example, about the obvious, professional deficiencies of Moses in his assumption of the vast accomplishments for which we know him now. One remembers the sharp comment that none of the prophets were Gifford lecturers and recalls in particular the words of Amos when he said: "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to

me, 'Go, prophecy to my people Israel.'" One wonders what would have happened to Jesus' gospel if He had been forced to place it in the hands of the professional clergy of the Temple priesthood and been denied the help of fishermen like Peter and tax-collectors like Matthew, and one remembers that the major heroes of Jesus were not Annas and Caiaphas but a despised Samaritan, a Roman soldier, a poor widow.

It is a well worn adage that for the performance of His wonders God moves in mysterious ways, but it is the great unlearned lesson of the churches and of the seminaries which train their ministers that God's choices in these matters both make mockery of the world's terminology and show us where the church's power really lies. Once the earliest days of the faith were left behind, there has never been any scarcity of laymen; we have about 90,000,000 of them in this country at this moment. Laymen seldom have to waste time proving that they mean what they say in their pronouncements about religion; few people find reasons for saying that laymen confuse their religious sincerity with the requirement to earn their bread and butter. Laymen are not penned up in the ecclesiastical headquarters; they are actually on the spot whenever significant decisions are being made in the community. Furthermore laymen possess a fresh and spontaneous advantage well described in *Time's* account of the appearance of Rosalind Russell in "Wonderful Town." Not everyone shared Miss Russell's confidence that the show was going to be a success, *Time* said. When she sang for her father-in-law, he held his temples and cried, "Are you going to bring *that* voice to Broadway?" Her gravelly, one-note vocalizing had been compared to the Ambrose Lightship calling to its mate. One critic thought she sounded like "a raven with a throat condition," and Miss Russell described her own singing by saying, "I don't sing. I gargle." Her dancing was no better than her singing, but in a role demanding both she made "Wonderful Town" the "biggest hit of the Broadway season," and *Time* explained the reason thus: "Rosalind Russell represents the triumph of personality over technique; she communicates to her audience all the rewarding warmth and humor of shared experience."

God's frequent use of laymen in the critical hours of His kingdom does not indicate that He has reluctantly retired to His second line of defense or sadly acquiesced in the need to use inferior materials. In God's will for the world through the church there are other skills than those of the professional ministry, and by virtue of inherent talent and ability, by reason of special knowledge acquired in other fields of employment, or by means of sympathy and understanding earned through common suffering and deprivation laymen are often actually better equipped for Christian ministry than those whom the seminaries train to minister.

In a day when we make so much of the lack of able ministers, it is the biggest responsibility of the seminaries to train men who can bring to life this tremendous, dormant power of the lay ministry. It is the biggest responsibility of the seminaries to train men who will remove themselves from the neck of the church's bottle and encourage the layman's "warmth of shared experience" to demonstrate again the triumph of personality over technique. It is the biggest responsibility of the seminaries to train men who will regard themselves not as incarnations of the ancient Atlas carrying the whole world around on their own shoulders but as captains of companies, directors of orchestras, coaches of teams. The preaching ministry on public platform or through quiet conversation in a neighbor's living room; the healing ministry by personal contact or through support of hospitals, nursing homes and clinics; the pastoral ministry by official acts of love and mercy or through brotherly concern for other people in their need—these things

were never intended to be kept exclusively for the professionals. They belong to the church and not to its clergy, and it is the witness of history that in the affairs of God's kingdom the volunteers have steadily outstripped the regulars, that the amateurs have repeatedly beaten the professionals.

The true apostolic succession does not stem from the Temple but from the fishing boats. To that high calling *all* church members have been summoned, and in the sense that all believers are priests it is the central function of the seminaries to train ministers of the ministering *community* which is the church's true stature and purpose. For the church is the body of Christ; and though professional ministers are a part of that body, they are not the whole; and the ultimate concern of the seminaries is with the whole of the body and not simply with one of its parts.

Apostolic Faith For Our Time

The Rev. George Tolover Tolson

Berkeley, California

SINCE *homo sapiens* first looked up from the clod he has been asking the what, the how, the whence and the why of all things. Hence the rise of myth, magic, religion, philosophy and science. To date some of these queries have been answered somewhat satisfactorily but surely not the "why." Spinoza was content to write "Nature" with a capital "N" and did not care if others wrote it "God." Einstein did not seem much interested in the "why." For that great mind and heart it seemed enough "to contemplate the mystery of conscious life perpetuating itself through all eternity . . . manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms." The rest of us with smaller minds and hearts both wish and need something more.

Apostolic Faith is defined as assured *elegchos* (convincing evidence) "of things hoped for." The *content* of that faith was believable until the modern age was under way (c. 1650). It is no longer given sufficient credence, if any at all, by many open and honest minded persons including some ministers and theological professors. The Hebrew-Christian Bible and practically all the great creeds were written while the conception of the universe was that of antiquity. Vast accumulations of knowledge and multiplication of the conception of the universe a billion times and more have brought about a post-Christian era. Secularizations have taken place so extensively and organized Christianity has so extensively conformed to "the world" that few Christians realize that we no longer have Apostolic Faith.

Why are so many Biblical and other formerly Christian lands now occupied by peoples of other faiths? Why have Fascism, Nazism, and Communism risen in Christian countries and the greatest wars been fought among Christians? Why have Buddhism and Mohammedanism each surpassed Christian missionary work in the Far East? It is largely because Jesus with his ethical religion has not been "lifted up." Paul, John, the Bible, and even the *logos* of Greek philosophy have been "lifted up," and Jesus mythologized till we no longer have a believable and inspiring "Apostolic Faith for Our Time."

Sixty years ago a college student decided that it would be good scientific and philosophical procedure to posit the thesis that Herbert Spencer's unknown and unknowable unity back of all reality is somewhat like the "Heavenly Father" of Jesus Christ. He decided to live accordingly as far as he could without appearing to be queer or unpractical. To his surprise it worked extremely well. Subjective? He knew that the illumination of Yellowstone Canyon and Falls from which he fled lest he choke to death was subjective. A vision shortly after a Christmas season of the virgin and bambino, much like Raphael's Madonna of the Grand Duke only with an encircling, brilliant aureola added, was subjective even as he knew at the instant. But for sixty

years the conviction has deepened that taking not all but the substance of Jesus' conception of Ultimate Reality, Jesus' set of values, and his attitude toward self and people is the way to live and that the world has been arranged for that kind of living by One Who has these qualities in Himself.

Reconsidering the natural world from this standpoint but ever with an open and honest mind one notes that by means of it over a billion years all living things have been evolved. This little world of ours with its good soils and bad, its Elysian Fields and its destructive terrors, its beauty and its horrors, and its marvels of earth, sea and sky invites, almost compels man for his existence, safety and comfort to employ, and thus develop, brawn, brain, skills and ingenuity, wonder and worship. Thus he "wins his soul," his personality, which like skills must be attained. If the world were neutral morally, it would not be so good a place for these purposes. The mature man can transform natural evils into spiritual benefits. This, too, argues for the wise goodness, not sentimentality, of the Creator.

Man reconsidered from our vantage point appears predominately capable and good. He has founded all institutions of civilization, written all moral codes and written all the Bibles of the world. All these, like nature, is predominately good. Man is supra-natural. He is able to do abstract thinking. Knowing good and evil he has conscience. He appreciates truth, beauty and goodness. He believes that he can make himself a different sort of person. He is so far above other animals and so akin to God that he believes that he will not be allowed forever to die.

Whether or not there is such process as causality there is sufficient ground of all reality. It stretches credulity or even imagination to the breaking point to suppose that all that has taken place in the natural and human universe could have lain in germ or merely dormant in a stone, a clod or a chemical mixture for a billion years before life appeared on the earth. Even if power of growth and reproduction had been blown from some distant star, which likewise seems impossible, that only pushes the problem of the origin of life further back. It does not solve it. Call the "sufficient background" Zeus, Yahweh, Adonai, God, Allah, or what not. Call it not Nature or Tyche.

Doubtless the Almighty could break His own laws and violate human personality by taking away man's freedom but there is no sufficient evidence that He has ever chosen to do so. This conclusion is confirmed when both Testaments are thoroughly investigated by employing the many ways of determining historical facts. Evidently the Omniscient has made the world with such wisdom and foresight that He needs not to change His uniform and dependable ways into confusion. Of all the hundreds of mythological tales of the origin of the world, sons of gods by mortal women, deaths and resurrections of gods and sons of gods so popular in Jesus' time, none can compare remotely with the Hebrew-Christian materializations of important religion truths.

Jesus Christ is descended from David as the New Testament declares repeatedly. He is one of us. He is no mere substitute for us. There is no substitute for godliness. Being the most human and least inhuman man who ever lived he becomes the highest revelation of what God is and what a man can be. When lifted up from mythology into his rightful place he becomes our Saviour. He saves us from actual sins and brings us nearer the unity with the Father which he himself enjoys. Heaven is fellowship with God, Jesus and all good people. Hell is the opposite.

God is and ever has been eager to grant healing forgiveness. He would destroy the moral nature of the universe including man if He forgave for any other reason than upon *metanoia*—

change of mind (literally), change of attitude, change of sets of values, change of heart and manner of life.

Jesus would not answer the question of the religious ideal without answering also the question of the moral ideal. Supreme is love of God but like it is love of others and love of self. A great professor of philosophy told a graduate group in philosophical ethics that this statement by Jesus was perfect, nothing needing to be added or taken away. A Roman stoic retorts, "Call him a slave who has Zeus for his forefather?" Bertrand Russell, one of the great minds of our time, braving a likely smile of derision, affirmed his conviction that what is needed is "love, Christian love or compassion," adding, "If you feel this you have a motive for existence, a guide in action, a reason for courage, an imperative necessity for intellectual honesty." Christian love without Christianity? Not for us of lesser minds and hearts. Social and political sciences and all the Bibles of the world emphasize parts of the Jesusian trinity of loves.

The qualities issuing from Jesus' trinity of loves when fortified by his sense of the sacredness of human beings become the greatest factor in personal and social salvation. Nothing is so important as the heralding by word and deed this believable and inspiring "Apostolic Faith for Our Time."